



PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

*A Guide to
the Practice of
Architecture,
Engineering, and
Land Surveying
in Massachusetts*

*Prepared Jointly by:
The Massachusetts Board of
Registration of Architects and the
Massachusetts Board of
Registration of Professional
Engineers and Land Surveyors*

Introduction

Safeguarding the public in the design and construction of buildings and public works is a shared responsibility; the professional architect and professional engineer work to ensure the competence and integrity of the design while assuming the responsibility and liability appropriate to the services performed; the professional land surveyor works to ensure the competence and integrity of boundary surveys while assuming the responsibility and liability appropriate to the services performed; and the Commonwealth's Board of Registration of Architects and Board of Registration of [Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors](#) have the responsibility to regulate the professional conduct of architects, engineers, and land surveyors, including cases of fraud, gross negligence, incompetence, or misconduct.

This Guide has been assembled to assist licensees in understanding your professional responsibilities as architects, professional engineers, or professional land surveyors, and to direct you to sources of information that can help answer questions arising in day-to-day practice of your profession.

~~At the same time,~~ The Boards recognize the interdisciplinary nature of the design and building industry and therefore have updated this Professional Practice Guide, which was originally drafted by a Joint Committee of Architects, Engineers and Land Surveyors. ~~The continuing purpose of this updated Guide is to assist licensed architects, professional engineers, and professional land surveyors working in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to better understand your individual and joint responsibilities as practitioners.~~ Working on the premise that a common understanding of each other's duties and legal responsibilities is essential to providing competent design services, the Boards continue to focus on ways to enhance practitioners' educational and practical experiences, strengthen relationships among those in professional practice, and, ultimately raise the quality of design services for the public good.

~~A number of architects, professional engineers, and professional land surveyors contributed many hours to prepare this Guide and share their understanding of today's practice with you.~~ It has been the Boards' objective to provide guidance as practitioners and to clarify the appropriate roles of their professions in the context of good judgment and state law.

In preparing this ~~brochure~~[Guide](#), the Boards identify commonly asked questions regarding practice as architects, engineers, and land surveyors, and provide concise answers whenever possible. Where simple answers do not suffice, this Guide provides references to additional sources of information. Practitioners are advised that this Guide is intended only to clarify general principles, and any person having specific questions should address them to the appropriate Board of Registration ~~or Counsel for the Board~~ or should seek assistance of their

| DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

own legal counsel.

In updating this Guide, the Boards came to a better appreciation of collaboration among the various professional disciplines. To this end, you are encouraged to do the same. We hope that you will find the time to participate actively in your professional societies, work on multi-discipline teams whenever possible, and support the good work of our dedicated boards of registration.

Commonly asked questions about professional practice...

Question 1: Where can practitioners learn more about their specific legal responsibilities in the Commonwealth?

Each board of registration posts the relevant parts of the Massachusetts General Laws (“MGL”) and the corresponding regulations on its website. Practitioners should be familiar with the Massachusetts General Laws (“MGL”) and the following laws in particular:

Architects
MGL Chapter 13 [sections 44A-44D](#)
MGL Chapter 112 [sections 60A-60O](#)

Architects, ~~and~~ Engineers and
[Land Surveyors](#)
MGL Chapter 7C [sections 44 - 58](#)
MGL Chapter 143 [sections 93-100](#)
MGL Chapter 112 [sections 61-65E](#)

Engineers and Land Surveyors
MGL Chapter 13 [sections 45 - 47](#)
MGL Chapter -112 [sections 81D-81T](#)

Practitioners should also be familiar with the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR); and in particular:

Architects
231 CMR [sections 1.00-4.00](#)

Architects, ~~and~~ Engineers and
[Land Surveyors](#)
[780 CMR](#) [sections 1, 13 - 127](#)

Engineers and Land Surveyors
250 CMR [sections 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7](#)

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The following is a list of regulations directly affecting the practice of architecture, engineering, or land surveying.

	Architects	Engineers and Land Surveyors	Building Regulations
	<u>231 CMR</u>	<u>250 CMR</u>	<u>780 CMR</u>
• Competence	4.01	5.02	
• Conflict of Interest	4.01	5.02	
• Full Disclosure & Public Statements	4.01	5.02	
• Compliance with Laws, Professional Conduct & Responsibility	4.01	5.02 and 7.02	I 13 and 127
• Advertising & Solicitation	4.01	5.03 and 5.08	
Use of Seal & Limits on Practice	4.02	5.01 and 5.03	113
Restricted & Prohibited Use of Titles & Standards of Professional Practice	4.03	5.02 and 5.08	

An official copy of the Code of Massachusetts Regulations containing board regulations may be purchased at the [State House Book Store in Boston](#) (617-727-2834). This information should be shared with other members within your firm.

Question 2: Who may be called an architect, professional engineer, or professional land surveyor?

Only those persons duly registered by the respective boards may be called an architect, ~~or professional engineer~~ [or professional land surveyor](#) (231 CMR, Architects and [250 CMR](#), Professional Engineers and Professional Land Surveyors).

For the use of the title [Professional Engineers](#) or [Professional Land Surveyors](#), [250 CMR 5.08](#) states that:

No person, other than a Registrant holding a current License to practice in the applicable profession, shall advertise or hold themselves out as either a Professional Engineer or a Professional Land Surveyor, or use any other title to imply that they are qualified to practice engineering or land surveying in the Commonwealth, or in any other way hold themselves out as able to perform any of the Licensed Branches of engineering or land surveying.

250 CMR 5.08 shall not prohibit a person who is not registered/Licensed in Massachusetts but who holds a current License to practice in another state or Jurisdiction and who declares or otherwise qualifies his or her title in a manner that does not imply that the person is qualified to practice in Massachusetts (e.g., "Professional Engineer, Kansas" would be acceptable).

The [Professional Engineering and Land Surveying Board](#) has issued an advisory guideline on the use of engineering or land surveying job titles by unlicensed individuals working within the engineering and land surveying business community. A copy of that advisory is attached as Addendum [A#1](#).

For the use of the title "architect," [GL c. 112, s. 60K](#) states:

No person shall, directly or indirectly, engage in the practice of architecture in this commonwealth, except as hereinafter set forth in section sixty L, or use the title "architect", "registered architect", "architectural designer", or display or use any words, letters, figures, title, sign, card, advertisement or other device to indicate that such person offers to engage or engages in the practice of architecture unless he is registered under the provisions of sections sixty A to sixty O, inclusive.

Also, regulation [231 CMR 4.03](#) governs the use of the title "architect." It states:

Neither the title "Architect" or any modification of said title shall be affixed or otherwise used in conjunction with any surname, word or business title when such use would imply that an individual, associate, partner or corporate officer is an architect when, in fact, such individual, associate, partner, or corporate officer is not a registered architect. An individual shall not be deemed to have violated 231

CMR 4.03 if he or she uses the title "Intern-architect", as long as he or she is enrolled, active and in good standing in, the NCARB Intern-architect Development Program (IDP).

[231 CMR 4.03](#) also requires architect firms to file notice of business names with the Board.

Question 3: When are architects or professional engineers required to use their seals?

The requirements for the use of the seal of a registered architect or the seal of a registered professional engineer are not identical and use of the seal is not interchangeable.

Under [MGL c.143, s. 54A](#), all architectural work requires the seal of a registered architect and all engineering work requires the seal of a registered professional engineer, unless the project is exempted from that requirement by some provision of [MGL c. 112, s. 60L](#) or [MGL c. 112, s. 81R](#) which makes preparation of the plans and/or reports by a registered architect or professional engineer unnecessary.

Architectural work requiring a seal results from the "practice of architecture," defined as:

—professional services in connection with the design, construction, enlargement or alteration of a building including consultations, investigations, evaluations, preliminary studies, aesthetic design, the preparation of plans, specifications and contract documents, the co-ordination of structural and mechanical design and site development, administration of construction contracts and any other similar service or combination of services in connection with the design and construction of buildings, regardless of whether one or all of these services are being performed and regardless of whether these services are performed in person or as the directing head of an office or organization performing them; provided, that the practice of architecture shall not include the practice of engineering as defined in this chapter, but a registered architect may perform such engineering work as is incidental to the practice of architecture—."

[MGL c. 112, s. 60A.](#)

Engineering work requiring a seal results from the "practice of engineering,"

which is defined as:

—any professional service or creative work requiring engineering education, training and experience and the application of special knowledge of the mathematical, physical and engineering sciences in such professional services or creative work as consultation, investigation, evaluation, planning, design and supervision of construction for the purpose of assuring compliance with specifications and design in connection with any public or private utility, structure, buildings, machines, equipment, processes, works or projects, but it shall not include the practice of architecture, as defined in section 60A, except

that a registered professional engineer may do such architectural work as is incidental to his work, nor shall it include the practice of land surveying, except that a registered professional engineer qualified in the branch of civil engineering may perform land surveying incidental to his engineering work in locating or relocating any of the fixed works embraced within the practice of civil engineering including property line determination.

MGL c. 112, s. 81D

Question 4: Are there exceptions when an architect's seal is not required in the Commonwealth?

The seal of a registered architect is required for all plans or specifications except as noted under stated in [MGL c. 112, s. 60L](#). Under that section, the following do not require an architect's seal:

- ~~1.~~ ~~I.~~ The preparation of plans and specifications for and the supervision of the construction, enlargement or alteration of
 - ~~2.~~ ~~1.~~
 - ~~(a)~~ Any building containing less than thirty-five thousand cubic feet of enclosed space, the computation to be made according to rules to be established by the board;
 - ~~(b)~~ ~~(a)~~ _____
 - ~~(c)~~ Any single or two-family house or any accessory building to such house;
 - ~~(d)~~ ~~(b)~~ _____
 - ~~(e)~~ ~~(c)~~ _____ Any building used for farm purposes;
2. The preparation of plans and specifications for and the supervision of the alteration of any building not involving substantial and major structural change; (*NOTE: Substantial and major structural change has been interpreted by the Board to include partitions and other fixed elements*)
- ~~3.~~ ~~2.~~ _____
4. The preparation of any detailed or shop plans required to be furnished by a contractor, or the administration of construction contracts by persons customarily engaged in contracting work;
- ~~5.~~ ~~3.~~ _____
6. The employees of a registered architect or persons acting under the architect's direction carrying out their normal duties in preparing plans and specifications or in the administration of construction contracts;
- ~~7.~~ ~~4.~~ _____
8. A licensed professional engineer performing, agreeing to perform, or holding himself out as able to perform services included in the practice of architecture that are incidental to the engineering work;

9.5.

10.

Officers and employees of the United States of America, while working in the Commonwealth, engaging in the practice of architecture as employees of said United States of America, and officers and employees of the Commonwealth or any of its subdivisions engaging in the practice of architecture as employees of the Commonwealth or any subdivision thereof;

11.6.

12.

The practice of landscape architects, city planners and regional planners providing consultations and preparing master plans of parks, land areas, sites, organized groups of buildings or communities or preparing detailed plans and supervising planting, grading, paving, and structural features such as fences, steps, walls, pools, garden structures, and minor utilities normally included as a part of their work.

13.7.

14.

A partnership or corporation entering into agreements to perform or holding itself out as able to perform any of the services involved in the practices of architecture, so long as any such agreement is executed by the partner, partners, officer or officers who are the registered architect or registered architects exercising professional and supervisory control over the particular services contracted for, provided that a registered architect who is such a partner or such an officer shall exercise professional supervisory control over the particular services contracted for by the partnership or corporation.

8.

15.

16.9.

A non-resident who holds a certificate of registration to practice architecture in the state in which he resides and in addition holds a certificate of qualification issued by the National Council of Architectural Registration Board ~~form~~ agreeing to perform or holding himself or herself out as able to perform any of the professional services involved in the practice of architecture; provided, that he ~~or she~~ shall not perform any of the professional services involved in the practice of architecture until registered as herein-before provided."

If one of the above exceptions does not clearly apply to the project in question, the seal of a registered architect is required.

Practitioners and the public should also note that local building officials can override the above exemptions and require drawings stamped by a design professional in special circumstances where required to protect public health and safety and if permitted by the State Building Code, which is a source of authority that cannot be superseded by local action.

Question 5: Are there exceptions when an Engineer's seal is not required in the Commonwealth?

The seal of a registered professional engineer is required for all plans or specifications except as noted under [MGL c. 112, s. 81R](#), which states:

Nothing in said sections shall be construed to prevent or to affect:--

(a) the practice of any other legally recognized profession including the practice of architecture as defined in this chapter ~~and the practice of any trade, including, in connection with the practice of the electrical, plumbing, heating, ventilating, air conditioning, refrigeration and all other trades, the preparation of plans, specifications or shop drawings by any person, firm, partnership, corporation or association practicing any such trade, for work to be installed or being installed by the same person, firm, partnership, corporation or association preparing such plans, specifications or shop drawings;~~

(b) a person not a resident of and having no established place of business in the commonwealth from practicing or offering ~~to practice therein the profession of engineering or land surveying, when such practice does not exceed in the aggregate more than thirty days in any calendar year; provided, such person is legally qualified by registration to practice the said profession in his own state or country in which the requirements and qualifications for obtaining a certificate of registration are not lower than those specified in said sections;~~

(c) a person not a resident of and having no established place of business in the commonwealth or who has recently become a resident thereof, from practicing or offering to practice engineering or land surveying therein for more than thirty days in any calendar year, if he shall have filed with the board an application for a certificate of registration and shall have paid the fee required by said sections; provided, that such person is legally qualified by registration to practice engineering or land surveying in his own state or country in which the requirements and qualifications for obtaining a certificate of registration are not lower than those specified in said sections. Such practice shall continue only for such time as the board requires for the consideration of the application for registration;

(d) the work of an employee or a subordinate of a person holding a certificate of registration under said sections, an employee of a person practicing lawfully under clause (b) or (c) of this section, or an employee of a firm, co-partnership, corporation or joint stock association engaging lawfully under clause (f) of this section; provided, such work does not include final designs or decisions and is done under the direct responsibility, checking and supervision of a person holding a certificate of registration under said sections or a person practicing lawfully under clause (b) or (c) of this section;

(e) the practice of officers and employees of the government of the United States while engaged within the commonwealth in the practice of engineering or land surveying for said government;

(f) the practice of engineering or land surveying in the commonwealth by a firm, co-partnership, corporation or joint stock association; provided, that the person in charge of such practice by such firm, co-partnership, corporation or joint stock association is a professional engineer or land surveyor, holding a certificate of registration under said sections;

~~(g)~~ —the performance of engineering work or services by employees of a corporation engaged in manufacturing, research or development operations, which work or services are performed in connection with the research or development activities of, or the manufacture, sale, installation, maintenance, repair or service of the products of, such corporation, or of its parents, affiliates or subsidiaries; provided, that such research or development activities which are not related to the manufacture, sale, installation, maintenance, repair or service of the products of such corporation, or of its parents, affiliates or subsidiaries, are not primarily in connection with the construction of fixed works which are to be made available for use by the general public;

~~(h)(g)~~ _____

~~(i)~~ —the practice of landscape architects, city planners and regional planners, in so far as their work consists in the consultations and preparation of master plans of parks, land areas, sites, organized groups of buildings or communities, or the preparation of detailed plans and the supervision of planting, grading, paving, and such structural features as fences, steps, walls, minor pools, garden structures and minor utilities normally included as part of their work;

~~(i)(h)~~ _____

~~(j)(i)~~ sales personnel from recommending applications to specific uses of products for which they act as sales representatives;

~~(k)~~ —the performance of engineering work or services by any person employed by an insurance company or by its agents, its affiliates or subsidiaries, or the performance of engineering work or services for insurance inspection and actuarial bureaus, provided such work or services in either case are incidental to the operation of an insurance company;

~~(m)(j)~~ _____

~~(n)(k)~~ the work of an owner or managing agent of a building or any employee of such owner or agent making alterations or repairs to such building or supervising the same, or of a person engaged by such owner or agent to perform work of any other legally recognized trade exempted under clause (a) of this section;

~~(o)(l)~~ the performance of engineering work and services by a person, firm or corporation subject to the jurisdiction of the department of public utilities or the department of telecommunications and cable which work and services are performed as part of their employment and for the benefit of such person, firm, or corporation; provided, however, that

this subsection shall not apply to engineering work or services that could pose a material risk to public safety, as determined by the department of public utilities, performed by or on behalf of a gas company, as defined in [section 1 of chapter 164](#), that distributes and sells gas within the commonwealth; or the performance of engineering work and services by employees of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority which work and services are performed as part of their employment and for the benefit of the said authority.

If one of the above-noted exceptions does not clearly apply to the project in question, the seal of a registered professional engineer is required.

Practitioners and the public should also note that local building officials can override the above exemptions and require drawings stamped by a design professional in special circumstances where required to protect public health and safety and if permitted by the State Building Code, which is a source of authority that cannot be superseded by local action.

Question 6: What is the impact of the Massachusetts State Building Code on the exceptions listed above to the requirement of a seal?

The design, permitting and construction of structures are also regulated in the Commonwealth by state laws (MGL c. 143, ss. 93-100) and regulations contained in the Massachusetts State Building Code (780 CMR). Architects, professional engineers and professional land surveyors are urged to become familiar with these laws and regulations, as well as the other state laws and regulations governing the practices of architects, professional engineers and professional land surveyors. Design professionals are directed to read 780 CMR, "Construction Control," in particular. See Addendum #2 for a more detailed discussion of the impact of the MA Building Code on professional practice of architects and engineers.

Question 7A: May an architect seal the work of others? When may the seal of the registered architect be used?

The licensing law for architects permits a licensee's seal to be placed only on work prepared by the licensee ~~himself/herself, personally~~ or by someone who has been directly and personally supervised by that licensee.

Specifically, the architect's official seal is intended for ~~his/her~~ personal use in conjunction with plans, specifications, and other instruments of architectural services prepared under ~~his/her the licensee's personal supervision and~~ responsible control and for which ~~she/he the licensee~~ will be responsible, and is not transferable. [MGL-c. 112, s. 60G\(e\)](#) and [231 CMR 2.02, 4.02\(2\)-\(3\)](#). "Responsible control" is defined

as:

That amount of control over and detailed professional knowledge of the content of technical submissions during their preparation as is ordinarily exercised by a registered architect applying the required professional standard of care. Except as permitted by 231 CMR 4.01(5): Professional Conduct, review and correction of technical submissions after they have been prepared by others does not constitute the exercise of responsible control because the reviewer has neither control over nor detailed professional knowledge of the content of such submissions throughout their preparation.

231 CMR 2.02.

An architect exercises “responsible control” in compliance with the regulations if the technical submissions were prepared by another person in the office where the architect practices regularly, or the architect has records ~~that~~ demonstrating that the architect has detailed knowledge of the content of the technical submissions. **BUT NOTE:** reviewing and correcting technical submissions is not sufficient by itself to meet the requirement for responsible control. 231 CMR 4.01(5)(b).

Question 7B: May a professional engineer or professional land surveyor seal the work of others? When may the seal of the registered professional engineer be used?

The professional engineer's or professional land surveyor's seal is to be used only by the registrant personally, and only on drawings and/or documents produced by the registrant personally or under the registrant's direct charge and supervision, (250 CMR 5.02(2)(e) and 5.04) 250 CMR 5.02(2)(e), 5.03(c) and 5.04-. Requirements for “direct charge and supervision” are set forth in 250 CMR 5.04. Each of the requirements in Section 5.04 must be met in order for a Registrant to seal work performed by an unlicensed individual. For professional engineers, MGL c. 112, s. 81P prohibits the placement of a professional engineer's seal on plans or drawings that have not been prepared either by the named licensee or by someone in the licensee's office or under the licensee's immediate and responsible direction and supervision.

Question 8: What constitutes an acceptable seal?

According to current laws and regulations, seals for architects, professional engineers, and professional land surveyors, or embossing presses for professional engineers and professional land surveyors, must meet Board requirements.

For licensed architects, seal requirements are set forth in 231 CMR 4.02(1), which specifies that the seal must be a rubber stamp that conforms exactly to the figure in that regulation. For requirements for electronic signatures, please refer to policies of the Architect Board or contact the Board.

Stamp/seal requirements for professional engineers and professional land surveyors are set forth in [250 CMR 5.03](#). Per [250 CMR 5.03\(1\)](#), the seal of a professional engineer and professional land surveyor must be a symbol or image in the form of a rubber stamp, embossed seal or digitized seal (computer generated image), or other form approved by the Board. A professional engineer may include his or her licensed discipline on the professional seal, but is not required to do so. If a professional engineer includes a discipline on the seal, it must be the discipline reflected on his or her certificate of registration, and cannot be any other discipline.

Also, for [professional](#) engineers, any document bearing the registrant's seal must also be appropriately dated and signed with either a legible ~~hand-written~~[handwritten](#) Signature adjacent to (not obscuring) the seal or a properly encrypted digital Signature, in compliance with 250 CMR. [250 CMR 5.03\(1\)](#). When a digital Signature is applied to an Instrument of Service, it must have an electronic authentication process attached to it that is uniquely associated with the [Registrant](#), can be authenticated by the recipient, and is uniquely linked to the underlying documents in a manner that will invalidate the digital Signature if any part of the document is changed. See 250 CMR 5.03(11). Registrants, municipal officials and the public should be aware that with modern technology it is easy for an unauthorized individual to edit plans that are in electronic form, such as pdfs, and to apply a registrant's seal and image of the [Registrant](#) signature to an electronic file without the registrant's permission. For this reason, an electronic document which contains the visible image of a professional seal and signature, but does not have an electronic authentication process attached to it, is not an authentic, certified document and should not be relied upon as such.

Question 9: May a professional engineer perform engineering work outside of the discipline/branch of engineering in which he is licensed?

Yes, the licensing law for professional engineers does not limit a professional engineer to the discipline in which the registrant is registered, but allows the registrant to practice in branches of engineering in which the registrant is competent even though outside that discipline indicated on their seal. 250 CMR 5.02(2)(b). However, those regulations clearly state that the [registrant Registrant](#) shall practice only in areas of competence for which the [Registrant Registrant](#) is qualified by

education and experience. The ~~board~~ Board is the only authority with jurisdiction to determine a registrant's professional competency. If a professional engineer does practice outside his or her licensed branch of engineering, the engineer must be prepared to demonstrate to the ~~board's~~ Board's satisfaction his or her competence to perform those services. Documentation of competence to the ~~board~~ Board shall include, at a minimum, records of specific education and experience obtained by the registrant in that additional branch of engineering. Determinations of personal competency require investigation into all relevant facts. Therefore, the Board will not issue individual determinations of personal competency outside of the complaint resolution process.

Professional engineers may not hold themselves out as registered in any discipline of engineering other than the discipline that appears on their certificate of registration/license. If an engineer wishes to be registered by the Board in an additional discipline of engineering, the engineer must submit an application for licensure and meet all current requirements for registration in that discipline. Engineers should consult 250 CMR 3.08 for further information.

Question 10: May business entities such as firms, partnerships or corporations provide professional design services?

When a ~~business entity-partnership~~ seeks to perform architectural services in Massachusetts, at least one partner must be registered as an architect in this state. MGL c. 112, § 60L(8); 231 CMR 4.04(3)(b). ~~When a corporation seeks to perform architectural services in Massachusetts, at least one of the officers established by the articles of incorporation or the corporation's by-laws must be a Massachusetts registrant and that officer must sign the contracts. MGL c. 112, § 60L(8); 231 CMR 4.04(2)(b). Under the law governing Professional Corporations (Chapter 156A of the General Laws), a~~ majority of directors of architecture firms organized as Professional Corporations ~~under Chapter 156A of the General Laws~~ must be licensed by the Board. All contracts of an architectural firm for the performance of architectural services must be signed by a Massachusetts licensed architect. MGL c. 112, § 60L(8); 231 CMR 4.00. ~~As discussed in Question 7A above, a licensee-licensed architect must either personally perform, or personally supervise the preparation of, any plans drawn which require the seal of a registered architect, and must sign and stamp all such plans. When the entity engaging to perform the architectural services is a corporation, at least one of the officers established by the articles of incorporation or the corporation's by-laws must be a Massachusetts registrant and that officer must sign the contracts.~~

MGL c. 7C, s. 44, which regulates state funded buildings and construction

projects, states that the person in charge of the performance of architectural or engineering services related to a public building project by the firm must be a registered architect or professional engineer for the project. It further states that for such projects, the majority of the directors ~~or~~ partners or a majority of the stock ownership and the chief executive officer must be persons who are registered architects or engineers.

Business entities providing or offering to provide engineering or surveying services must meet the requirements of 250 CMR 5.05.

Question 11: May an architect or professional engineer do work in each other's discipline?

The definition of the "practice of architecture" in [MGL c. 112, s. 60A](#) states that a registered architect may perform such engineering work as is incidental to the practice of architecture. [The definition of the "practice of engineering" in MGL c. 112, s. 81D](#) states that a registered professional engineer may do such architectural work as is incidental to the engineer's work.

The law does not elaborate on the definition of "incidental." Therefore, the architect and engineer must be guided by professional judgment and accepted standards of practice in determining the meaning of "incidental." Licensed architects, professional engineers and professional land surveyors should practice within their areas of professional competence and consult with other design professionals when the work falls outside their competence.

Question 12: Can a ~~Professional-professional Engineer-engineer (PE)~~ certify¹ a site plan ~~or an as-built plan~~ which references ~~and/or utilizes~~ a property line determination that was previously completed by a ~~Professional-professional Land-land Surveyor-surveyor(PLS)~~?

~~Answer:—No, except in the limited circumstances set forth below, a professional engineer cannot certify a site plan or an as-built plan which references and/or utilizes a property line determination that was previously completed by a professional land surveyor.~~

Although state law allows a ~~professional-engineer~~ professional engineer qualified in civil engineering to perform land surveying work incidental to his or her engineering work, such as topographical measurements, the law clearly states that ~~an-engineer~~ a professional engineer cannot make property line determinations. [See M.G.L. c. 112, s. 81D](#). As stated

¹ Use of the word "certify" includes the act of signing, sealing and/or stamping a plan by the Professional Engineer.

in Board regulation [250 CMR 5.01](#), “the delineation of existing or proposed structures, features or Boundaries relative to property lines requires the determination of property lines and therefore must be performed by a Professional Land Surveyor.” When ~~an engineer~~ [a professional engineer](#) obtains an electronic or hardcopy of a pre-existing survey plan and adds his or her engineering work to that plan, the ~~engineer~~ [professional engineer](#) ~~appears to be~~ representing where the property line exists relative to his/her work for the purpose of the ~~professional engineer’s~~ [engineering](#) project. However, ~~this representation is not valid because~~ the ~~engineer~~ [professional engineer](#) cannot be certain that the pre-existing survey accurately reflects the current conditions of the property and is sufficiently reliable to be used for the ~~professional engineer~~ [PE](#)’s current project. For example, potential issues with the prior survey include:

- a. ~~boundary~~ [Boundary](#) lines have changed since date of survey;
- b. ~~a~~ [A](#) survey of adjacent property conflicts with prior survey;
- c. ~~overburden~~ [Overburden](#) of survey for different purpose (e.g. mortgage inspection survey);
- d. ~~not~~ [Not](#) in conformance with rules of evidence and 250 CMR;
- e. ~~court~~ [Court](#) decree overturning prior survey;
- f. ~~legitimate~~ [Legitimate](#) claims of occupation and encroachments;
- g. ~~On~~ [On](#)-site construction after date of prior survey.

For this reason, except in the limited situations described below, ~~an engineer~~ [a professional engineer](#) cannot certify a site plan showing property lines.

The only exceptions to the above-stated rule are when:

~~(2)(1) the surveyor~~ [professional land surveyor](#) is a member of ~~the~~ [a project development team](#), ~~or the survey was specifically commissioned for the engineer’s project,~~ ~~and the professional engineer’s work is added to said survey. A complete design package submitted by the project development team would include the survey stamped by the professional land surveyor and the engineering plan(s) stamped by the professional engineer indicate the survey as “background” information.~~

~~(4)(2) the engineer~~ [professional engineer](#) consults with the ~~surveyor~~ [professional land surveyor](#) who performed the prior survey, and ~~that surveyor~~ [the professional land surveyor](#) confirms that the survey information on the filed plan reflects current conditions of the property and is sufficiently reliable to be used for the purpose of the ~~engineer’s~~ [professional engineer’s](#) project, and the ~~surveyor~~ [professional land surveyor](#) stamps the land surveying work, ~~or~~

~~(2) the surveyor is a member of the project development team or the survey was specifically commissioned for the engineer’s project.~~

Question 13: Is the architect, professional engineer, or professional land

surveyor required to display certificates of registration?

Registered architects are required to display their certificates of registration in a conspicuous place in their places of business. [MGL c. 112, s. 60E](#). There is no current posting requirement for professional engineers and professional land surveyors.

Question 14: Is continuing education a requirement for renewing registration in the Commonwealth?

Architects are required to obtain continuing education hours each calendar year as a condition of the annual renewal of the license. [231 CMR 3.06](#). Licensees should consult the current regulation at [231 CMR 3.06](#) for specific requirements.

At present, professional engineers and professional land surveyors are not required to complete continuing education as a condition of renewing their license. However, Board regulations require [professional registration](#) to stay current with theoretical, technological and practical developments within their profession and maintain personal competency for acceptable practice throughout a [professional registration](#) career. [250 CMR 5.02\(2\)\(f\)](#).

Question 15: When is an architect, professional engineer, or professional land surveyor required to obtain insurance coverage for his/her professional liability?

In general, architects and professional engineers are not required by law to maintain professional liability insurance [except as described here](#):-

- ~~However,~~ On certain public projects see, for example, [MGL c. 7C, s. 51\(e\)](#), design professionals are required to maintain professional liability insurance covering negligent errors, omissions and acts in specified amounts.
- [For architects, limited liability companies \(LLC\) and limited liability partnerships that perform or offer architectural services must maintain insurance covering negligent acts, errors, and omissions; practitioners should consult the regulations to determine the amount of insurance required. 231 CMR 4.04\(7\).](#)

Decisions to maintain professional liability insurance, however, typically are based on the personal and business needs of the practitioner and should only be made after consulting experts in the field.

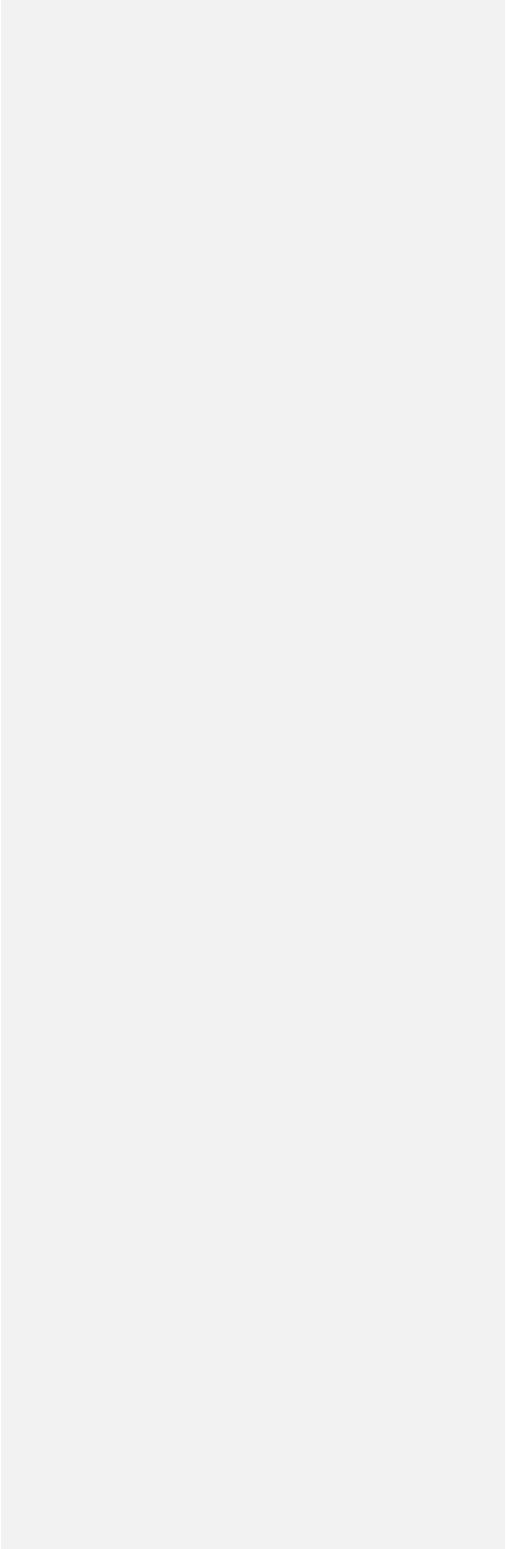
Question 16: Who is responsible for enforcing the regulations and statutes governing professional practice as an architect, professional engineer, and

professional land surveyor in the Commonwealth?

The governing body that enforces the ~~various~~ laws and regulations pertaining to professional ~~licensure practice~~ is the appropriate board of registration. Design professionals should also consult other authorities having jurisdiction over the form of business and building regulation.

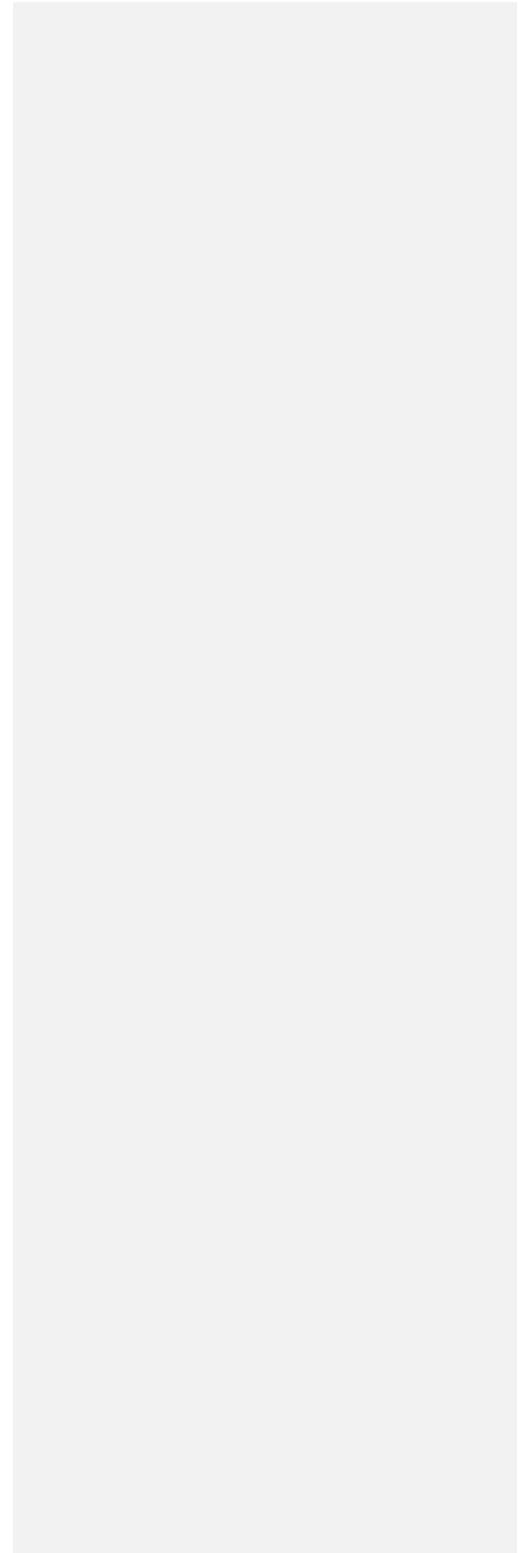
However, your personal involvement as a registered professional is key to each board's success in discharging its duties. All registered professionals have a responsibility to uphold the governing laws, regulations, and professional standards. Registered professionals also have an ethical and moral responsibility to help govern and regulate the practice of their discipline and to assist those charged directly by the Governor or courts in discharging their duties to safeguard the health and safety of consumers.

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ADDENDUM #1

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Board of Registration of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors Advisory on the Use of Job Titles that include the term “Engineer” or “Surveyor”

In response to questions received from the engineering and land surveying business community, the Board of Registration of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors (“the Board”) issues this advisory opinion on the use of engineering or land surveying job titles by unlicensed individuals working within the engineering and land surveying business community.

Massachusetts state law prohibits an individual who is not licensed as a professional engineer in the Commonwealth from using a job title which implies to the public that the individual is capable of performing engineering services. See M.G. L. c. 112, §§ 81D, 81T. Similarly, state law prohibits an individual who is not licensed as a professional land surveyor in the Commonwealth from using a job title which implies to the public that the individual is capable of practicing land surveying. These laws are implemented by Section 5.08 of Board regulations which states the following:

5.08: Use of Title Engineer or Land Surveyor

No person, other than a Registrant holding a current License to practice in the applicable profession, shall advertise or hold themselves out as either a Professional Engineer or a Professional Land Surveyor, or use any other title to imply that they are qualified to practice engineering or land surveying in the Commonwealth, or in any other way hold themselves out as able to perform any of the Licensed Branches of engineering or land surveying.

For companies that offer engineering or land surveying services to the public, a job title that includes the term “engineer” or “surveyor” implies to the public that the individual holding that job title is qualified to perform engineering or surveying work without supervision and therefore requires licensure by the Board.² See Opinion of the Attorney General, dated August 12, 1965 & Opinion of the Attorney General dated March 9, 1971. For this reason, the Board cautions against engineering or land surveying firms allowing unlicensed employees to hold themselves out to the public as a “Civil Engineer,” “Electrical Engineer,” “Graduate Engineer/Surveyor,” “Project Engineer,” or “Associate Engineer/Surveyor.” If the Board receives a complaint about a title being used by an unlicensed employee in an engineering or land surveying firm, the Board would consider whether there is clear notice to the public that the unlicensed individual is not qualified to provide unsupervised engineering or land surveying services. If the title contains the term “engineer” or “surveyor” and is used in a manner that could mislead or deceive the public into believing that the unlicensed individual is qualified to practice engineering or surveying, the Board may initiate disciplinary proceedings against the unlicensed individual and his or her employer.

There are a few statutory exemptions to the general rule that the job title “engineer” or “surveyor” requires licensure by the Board.

Exemptions to general rule that use of the term “engineer” or “surveyor” in job title requires licensure as a professional engineer:

The individual is licensed as a 1st, 2nd or 3rd class Engineer by the Boiler & Pressure Vessel Licensing Program under M.G.L. c. 146, and uses the title Engineer as authorized by that licensing law.

The individual holds a certificate as an Engineer-In-Training/Surveyor-In-Training issued by the

²[Opinion of the Attorney General, Dated August 12, 1965](#)

Board and uses the title “Engineer-In-Training”/“Surveyor-In-Training.”

The individual is an employee of a manufacturing company and is lawfully performing engineering work under the Manufacturing Exemption in G.L. c. 112, s. 81R.

The individual is licensed in another state and lawfully practicing with a Temporary Permit or clearly qualifies his or her title in a manner that makes clear the individual’s states of licensure. G.L. c. 112, s. 81R(b) and (c) and 250 CMR 5.08.

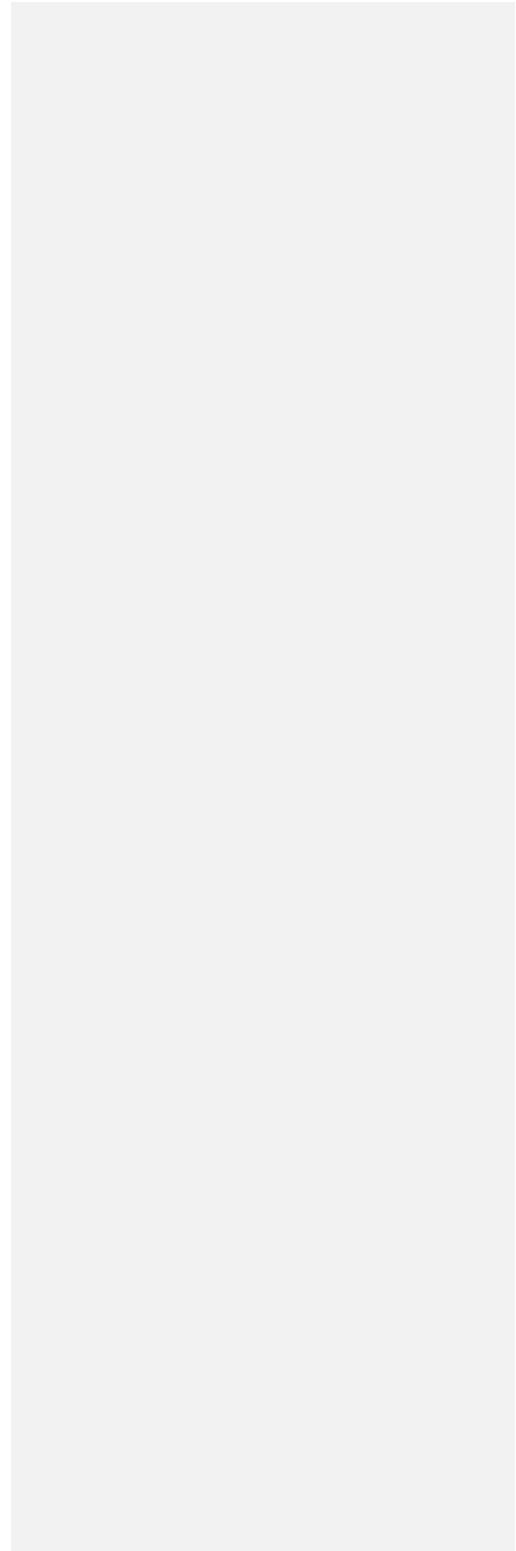
The individual is using “engineer” or “surveyor” in a manner which makes clear that the individual is not qualified to practice engineering without supervision. For example, under certain circumstances, the titles “apprentice engineer” or “junior engineer” would not imply to the public that the holder of that title is capable of independently practicing engineering and therefore may be permissible.

As stated above, this advisory is issued in response to questions received from members of the engineering and land surveying business community. Nothing in this advisory shall be construed to waive or modify any applicable provision of law or regulation. In addition, advisory opinions may be rescinded or modified by the Board at any time.

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ADDENDUM #2

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How are the Massachusetts Statutes and Regulations governing Professional Practice interconnected to the Massachusetts Building Code?

The ~~current 780 CMR~~ Massachusetts State Building Code ~~at 780 CMR is in its 9th Edition; it~~ adopts as its Model Code, the ~~2015~~ International Building Code (IBC) with Massachusetts Amendments [A]. The IBC has ~~currently~~ been adopted by all 50 states. As Massachusetts Amendments are found throughout the Model Code, it is important that practitioners familiarize themselves with what is unique. *Chapter 1 Scope and Administration* is unique to Massachusetts. The intent of 780 CMR is stated as follows:

[A] 101.3 Intent

The purpose of 780 CMR is to establish the minimum requirements to safeguard the public health, safety and general welfare through structural strength, means of egress facilities, stability, sanitation, adequate light and ventilation, energy conservation, and safety to life and property from fire and other hazards attributed to the built environment, and to provide safety to fire fighters and emergency responders during emergency operations.

Section 107 Submittal Documents and Construction Control outlines requirements unique to Massachusetts.

Section 107.6.2 Registered Design Professional Services, outlines requirements and responsibilities for Design and Construction.

Because this widely adopted Model Code needs to adapt to many jurisdictions that may have differing definitions of the practice of architecture or the practice of engineering, it uses the generic term “Registered Design Professional” and does not specify whether that professional is an architect, a ~~registered~~ ~~design professional~~, etc. The ~~current~~ Massachusetts State Building Code defines the term “Registered Design Professional” and “Registered Design Professional in Responsible Charge” as “~~any~~ ~~design professional~~ who is licensed or otherwise authorized to practice in their respective design profession as defined by the statutory requirements of the professional registration laws of the Commonwealth.”

Commented [HJF(1)]: I deleted this since it seemed redundant with "the MBC" referenced at the beginning of the paragraph, but if you want to leave it in, feel free to reject it.

As discussed elsewhere in this Guide, General Laws Chapter 112, Section 60A is the Massachusetts Statute that defines the Practice of Architecture, and Chapter 112, Section 81D defines the Practice of Engineering.

In traditional interdisciplinary design projects, the different disciplines assemble their respective documents and drawings to create a complete set. The architect typically signs and seals the A-Series drawings, the ~~registered design professional~~ signs and seals ~~the~~ drawings, etc., and the content of these documents aligns falls within the parameters of in the statutory definitions of their respective practices.

~~However, unique to the~~ The Definition definition of the Practice of Architecture, Chapter 112, Section 60A assigns includes certain coordination of interdisciplinary design, development, and administration responsibility to the Architect with respect to the design and construction of buildings:

“...the co-ordination of structural and mechanical design and site development, administration of construction contracts and any other similar service or combination of services in connection with the design and construction of buildings, regardless of whether one or all of these services are being performed and regardless of whether these services are performed in person or as the directing head of an office or organization performing them; ...”

~~As the Practice of Architecture includes unique responsibility for coordination and administration of construction contracts for buildings, the~~ The Board of Registration of Architects has established Rules of Professional Conduct to ensure appropriate adherence to and disclosure of life safety issues and consumer

protections. A sample of them is outlined below:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/231-cmr-4-rules-of-professional-conduct/download>

Per: 231 CMR 4.00: RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

4.01: Rules of Professional Conduct...

(1) Competence.

...

(b) In designing a project, an architect shall take into account all applicable state and municipal building laws and regulations. While an architect may rely on the advice of other professionals (e.g., attorneys, engineers, and other qualified persons) as to the intent and meaning of such regulations, once having obtained such advice, an architect shall not knowingly design a project in violation of such laws and regulations.

There are instances where the Board of Registration of Architects requires a Registered Architect to report safety concerns to a local building inspector or public official charged with enforcing applicable state or municipal building laws and regulations.

4.01: Rules of Professional Conduct

(3) Full Disclosure.

...

(c) If, in the course of his or her work on a project, an architect becomes aware of a decision taken by his or her employer or client, against the architect's advice, which violates applicable state or municipal building laws or regulations and which will, in the architect's judgment, materially affect adversely the safety to the public of the finished project, the architect shall:

- 1. report the decision to the local building inspector or other public official charged with the enforcement of the applicable state or municipal building laws and regulations,*
- 2. refuse to consent to the decision, and*
- 3. in circumstances where the architect reasonably believes that other such decisions will be taken notwithstanding his or her objection, terminate his or her services with reference to the project.*

In the case of a termination in accordance with 231 CMR 4.01(3)(c) the architect shall have no liability to his or her client or employer on account of such termination.

The Board of Registration of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors has also established rules of professional conduct in 230 CMR 5.02 which place upon the Professional Engineer an ethical duty to the public, the profession and clients.

230 CMR 5.02: Professional Conduct

(1) Responsibility: A Registrant shall hold paramount the health, property and welfare of the public in the performance of the Registrant's professional duties.

(2) If the professional judgment of any Registrant is overruled under circumstances where the health, property or welfare of the public may be endangered, that Registrant shall notify the Registrant's employer, client or such other authority as may be appropriate.

~~104.12 Registered design professionals shall provide professional services that are based on independent professional judgment, founded on their adequate knowledge of the laws and based on their competence in the subject matter.~~

The Massachusetts Building Code recognizes that there are situations not contemplated and as a result do not have requirements that adequately address life safety issues. In the instances where specialized buildings and structures have unique code requirements or national recognized standards not required in ~~780 CMR~~ (the ~~MA~~ Building Code), the registered design professional shall provide sufficient information to building officials to support their approval:-

104.12 Matters Not Provided For

In recognition of the inherent difficulty of drafting a functional code that contemplates every situation that may arise in the area of building safety, this section provides the building official, the Building Code Appeals Board, or the BBRS itself, with reasonable discretion to ensure that all life safety issues that may arise in the enforcement of 780 CMR may be appropriately addressed. Matters not specifically provided for in 780 CMR regarding structural, egress, fire, energy, sanitary or other requirements essential to occupant safety shall be determined by the building official or, in the case of an appeal, the Building Code Appeals Board. The details of action granting modifications shall be recorded and entered in the files of the building official. For highly specialized buildings and structures that conform to unique code requirements or nationally recognized standards not required in 780 CMR, registered design professionals shall provide sufficient information to the building official to support their approval.

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